

Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

November 21, 2013

Safety Edition

Archives

Print Page

Print
Entire Edition

SPECIAL SAFETY EDITION

Committed To Safety

by Dave Nichols

Welcome to a special edition of *Connections* completely focused on safety. Being safe is the most important thing we do here at MoDOT, and it must be our constant, daily focus.

At the quarterly Tracker meeting in Jefferson City, I heard from employees who said they sometimes find themselves too busy to stop and think about safety. This is exactly what we have to change, because it's the mindset that will lead to injury.

Please take time to read through this issue and reinforce your own commitment to safety. Share it with your co-workers, or make it a part of your morning muster.

You've heard it before, but it's worth repeating: We must have a healthy and safe work environment for every MoDOT employee and all our customers and transportation partners.

Thank you for being a part of the MoDOT team. Keep up the great work, and remember:

**SAFETY
BEGINS
WITH ME**

Be safe out there,
Dave

Keeping Safety In The Forefront

by Tammy Wallace

If you ask MoDOT employees what single issue should be at the forefront of everything they do, they would say safety.

Helping employees commit to working safely each day and making it easy for them to locate the safety information they need was the motive for two of the ideas implemented this year - My Safety Commitment and the Comprehensive Safety Program Site.

My Safety Commitment

Being safe takes a personal commitment. Using the five safety

My Safety Commitment



I'm Safe
I will use my knowledge, awareness and attitude to make me a safe employee.



What I Use Is Safe
I will properly use personal protective equipment, procedures, equipment and materials to ensure my safety.



Where I Am Is Safe
I will ensure my environment, building and job site are prepared and maintained to ensure my co-workers and I are safe.



My Customers Are Safe
I will consider the impact of my decisions and actions on my customers.



So We Go Home Safe
I will share safety information with my team and speak up when I see something unsafe.

I will make safety my highest priority and do everything within my power so everyone goes home safe every day.

SAFETY BEGINS WITH ME

messages, the safety commitment explains each employee's role in staying safe every day and serve as a safety checklist for the job at hand.

The response by employees to the messages was so positive, they are being used in a variety of safety related materials, and were incorporated in our Tangible Results.

Comprehensive Safety Site
In October, the one-stop-shop for safety related information was launched. Now, any safety-related information needed by employees can be found in one convenient location that is user-friendly and easy- to-understand. The five safety messages were used as the foundation for organizing the information and developing the site.

Over the next several months, every safety policy and procedure will be reviewed. A new template will be used to organize the policy information in an easy-to-understand format.

Everything you need to know about safety can be found on the site - <http://sharepoint/safety/csp/default.aspx>. It can also be accessed from your smartphone - [App Downloading from the MoDOT App Store.doc](#) (links work for active employees only).

How Does MoDOT Perform When It Comes To Safety

by Holly Dentner

On Nov. 14, MoDOT employees from across the state gathered in Jefferson City for the quarterly meeting to discuss Tracker, MoDOT’s performance management tool. These quarterly meetings have been happening for years, but this time there was something new: Tracker Focal Point.



Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger kicks off the first Tracker Focal Point discussion on safety.

Tracker Focal Point is a new performance management tool that takes a deeper look at performance on the district and division levels. Because Tracker has become more focused on the most relevant measures associated with our tangible results, the Tracker Focal Point allows the department to examine and compare additional data from across the state.

“Taking this deep dive into the data from districts and divisions reinforces our goal of making every employee responsible for MoDOT’s performance,” said Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger. “It’s a way to make sure we are all accountable for our work.”

Each quarter a different focus area will be selected for the Tracker Focal Point, but the first issue targeted MoDOT’s highest priority: safety.

“The purpose of the Tracker Focal Point meeting was to start the discussion. We talked about things we can control so we can figure out how to do better,” said Hassinger. “If a district or division is doing well, we want to find out what they are doing so we can all benefit.”

The Safety Focal Point was divided into five sections, based on MoDOT’s safety commitment. Each section – I’m Safe, What I Use is Safe, Where I Am is Safe, My Customers are Safe, and So We All Go Home Safe – was comprised of all the district and division Tracker measures related to that part of the commitment.

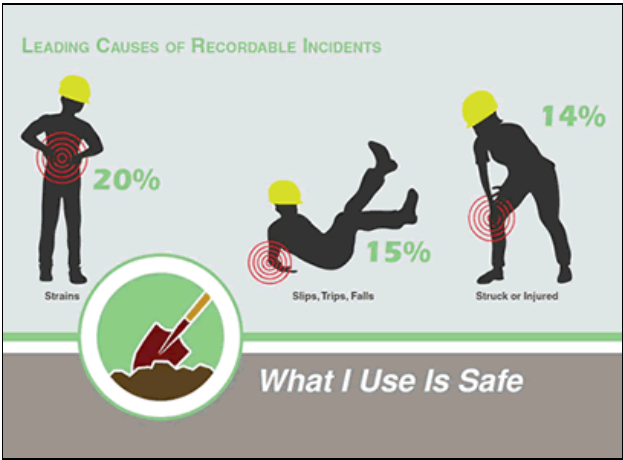
One of the first topics of discussion at the meeting was the goal of having 100 percent of MoDOT employees certified in CPR. MoDOT Director Dave Nichols expressed his thanks to those who serve as trainers and encouraged everyone to continue working toward this goal.

Hassinger led the conversation for the bulk of the meeting, which covered everything from work zone surveys to getting employees comfortable with talking about “near miss” experiences with their peers.

“We also spent some time talking about the most common causes for employee incidents, which includes strains, slips, trips and falls, and being struck,” said Hassinger. “These are the incidents that worry me, because there’s a fine line between a near miss and someone getting killed. Preventing these incidents means constant vigilance from every employee.”

Hassinger challenged district management to conduct safety audits whenever they visit the buildings and offices.

“Making safety a priority means taking it seriously, paying attention, and promoting safe behaviors even when you think it might be inconvenient,” said Hassinger. “We can’t let up. Make safety your focus every single day.”



District and division managers will take the recommendations and action items from the Tracker Focal Point meeting and begin incorporating them into daily life at MoDOT. The next Tracker Focal Point will feature customer service.

Long Range Plan - Safety Is A Priority For Missourians

by Bob Brendel

When the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan was shared with the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission earlier this month, the needs of Missourians for the state’s transportation system were characterized in four goal areas:

- Take care of the transportation system and services we enjoy today;
- Keep all travelers safe, no matter the mode of transportation;
- Invest in projects that spur economic growth and create jobs; and
- Give Missourians better transportation choices (more viable urban and rural transit, friendlier bike and pedestrian accommodations, improvements in rail, ports and airport operations).

In this special safety-focused edition of *Connections*, we are sharing safety-related excerpts from the LRTP’s executive summary. The full document, as well as the technical report, may be read at www.missourionthemove.org. Both documents can be found under the “Background” tab.

Missourians told us keeping Missouri’s existing roads and bridges in good condition should be one of the state’s highest priorities. This was a critical point we heard from nearly every person with whom we met, and the issue really comes down to the safety of Missouri citizens, families and those who travel in our state.

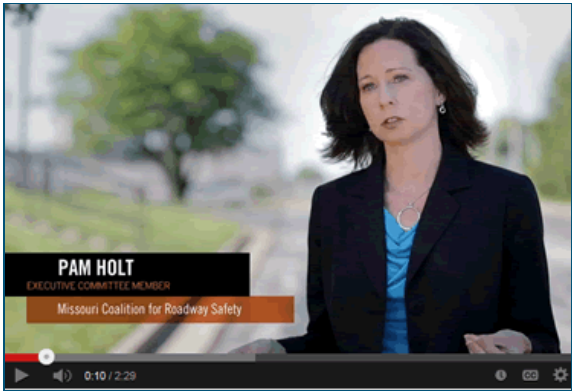
Safety is at the core of everything we do. Strategic investments in engineering, emergency medical services, enforcement and education have been proven to reduce fatalities and serious accidents. While progress has been made statewide over the past several years to make roads smoother and safer, anyone who travels around the state knows that there are many areas that need to be fixed. Based on current revenue projections the problem will only get worse.

Between 2005 and 2012, as bridge and highway conditions improved, roadway fatalities decreased by more than 34 percent. While this progress is important to note, the reality is one death is too many. Safety and the upkeep of our current system are two of our four major goals.

In a nutshell, with declining transportation funding and increasing costs from inflation, MoDOT’s ability to adequately maintain bridges and highways is impossible moving forward.

GOAL -Keep all travelers safe, no matter the mode of transportation

Our goal is zero deaths for those who are traveling in Missouri. It means adding shoulders to rural roads, improving signs and adding rumble strips or guard rails to our roads so cars, trucks, buses and motorcycles can travel safely. It means investing in more bike lanes to protect bicyclists and improving intersections where roads and rails meeting. It means



Pam Holt, executive committee member for the Missouri Coalition of Roadway Safety, discusses how safety is key to a vision for Missouri’s transportation system.

providing safe and secure bus and transit stops and keeping up with vehicle technologies.

Fatalities sharply decreased from 1,257 in 2005 to 826 in 2012. But since 2005, 7,616 lives have been lost. We believe that even one transportation-related death on our system is unacceptable and have a zero lives lost goal.



Sherry Cybularz, Shoulders for Safety, explains how adding shoulders makes a significant impact to safety on rural roads.

There is still significant work to be done. We must modernize the system to meet today’s safety needs and standards. Modern infrastructure features (guard cables, rumble strips, wider shoulders) that keep drivers safely on the road don’t exist on the vast majority of state roads. A safe road system also protects public transit passengers and improves the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Another factor affecting the safety of our transportation system is drivers are more distracted than ever. Texting, eating and talking on the phone while driving continues to increase. So, while we have a zero transportation death goal, there’s also a recognition that personal responsibility is at the core of transportation safety and drivers cannot control what

other people do.

Looking forward, we can make travel safer for Missourians through strategies such as:

- Investing in system-wide safety improvements that reduce roadway fatalities and disabling injuries,
- Increasing access and providing protection for bicyclists and pedestrians,
- Providing safer, secure links and connection points between the various types of transportation,
- Expanding partnerships with safety advocates around the state to identify and implement safety improvements, and
- Increasing safety belt usage.

CONCLUSION

We spent the past year listening to Missourians and hearing that a safe transportation system is important to them.

However, with declining transportation funding and increasing costs from inflation, MoDOT’s ability to adequately maintain bridges and highways, keeping our system safe, is impossible moving forward, let alone focusing on the many needs we heard from Missourians during On the Move.

We cannot sit back and watch Missouri’s system become obsolete and slide into disrepair. We went to great lengths to understand and create the transportation vision that Missourians want through On the Move, and we need to keep that momentum alive. We will continue to look to Missourians across the state to help us make this vision a reality.

PPE Requirements Made Easier

by Tammy Wallace

One of the biggest changes made in how MoDOT looks at safety is the use of personal protection equipment, which includes hard hats, safety glasses, clothing, vests, footwear and more. There has been a lot to learn about using our PPE to help keep us safe on the job.

To help make it easier for employees to know what they need to wear and when, four new PPE fliers are being created. The fliers will give employees a good overview of what PPE is required for what type of work in one easy glance. The fliers will show:

- Daytime MoDOT Worker
- Daytime MoDOT Flagger
- Nighttime MoDOT Worker
- Nighttime MoDOT Flagger

Once the fliers are finalized, the Traffic and Design Divisions will work to update the requirements in the Engineering Policy Guide. The fliers will be distributed and added to the comprehensive safety site. A launch date will be scheduled in January, so watch for more details to come.

The draft flier below shows employees the required PPE used for a Daytime MoDOT Worker:



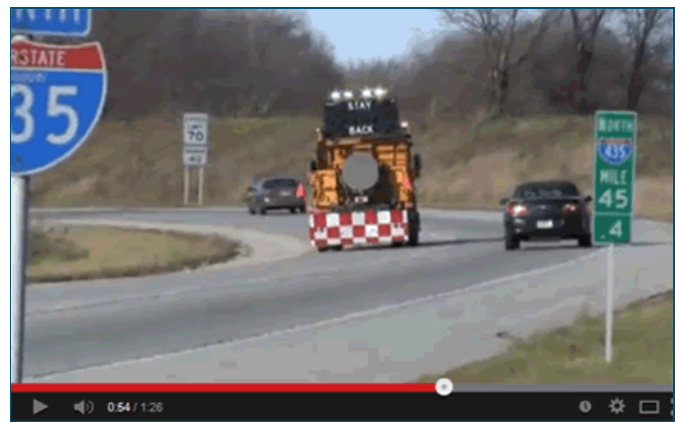
MoDOT Considers Adding Long-Range Acoustical Device to Road Safety Tools

by Michele Compton

The gray contraption mounted to the Truck Mounted Attenuator on the back of the MoDOT truck looked like an oversize satellite dish, but it wasn't a receiver. It was sending a message, loud – in fact, VERY LOUD – and clear: followed by “Slow Vehicles Ahead.”

Slow moving operations like striping and sweeping move 8-14 mph directly in or straddling a lane of traffic. Couple this with quick interstate speeds and it can be a recipe for disaster for distracted or fatigued drivers. MoDOT has been working diligently for several years to eliminate these crashes, and the LRAD, or Long Range Acoustical Device, could be one of the newest tools in our arsenal.

The LRAD puts out up to 153 decibels of sound through an emitter, not a loud speaker. The sound easily penetrates the windshield and well-insulated cab of a car, even overriding the vehicle's engine sounds and a radio turned up loud enough to jam to tunes at highway speeds.



A short video clip shows how traffic around the TMA sets off the warning device.

And that's just what MoDOT engineers and maintenance workers want. Yet another way to get the attention of motorists coming up rapidly behind MoDOT workers and equipment in work zones.

Over the summer, the LRAD project team tested the potential system in the Truman Sports Complex parking lot in Kansas City. Testing showed that sound penetrated windshields and competed with a radio from up to 400 and 500 feet away.

After that successful foray, MoDOT executed a research contract with the University of Missouri-Columbia to assist with data collection and evaluation to determine viability for full department use.

In October, the project field-tested the system in Central District. This month, it was also field-tested further in Clay County and in St. Louis.

On Nov. 20, the team tested a radar unit that detects at-risk vehicles and triggers the LRAD when these cars meet certain distance thresholds. On Nov. 19, the team tested leaving the LRAD on 100 percent of the time. Traffic is videotaped the

entire time so researchers can analyze traffic behaviors.

University researchers will evaluate the data over the next few months to determine the effectiveness of the system. But initial reviews show that the LRAD TMA was effective for getting drivers to move over earlier as compared to a typical TMA set up.

While this product has been used for several years successfully in military and police operations, MoDOT is the first transportation department to test LRAD's product for traffic safety.

This is just one of the many solutions MoDOT is using to improve safety. Some other tools already in place include:

- **TMA light bar:** A LED light bar mounted on top of the arrow board to provide drivers with more visual cues. This was a Kansas City District Solutions at Work innovation.
- **Shadow vehicle for striping trains:** The truck stays on the shoulder well behind the TMA and warns motorists of the upcoming operation and the need to move over.
- **St. Louis District Operator-Controlled LED/Horn Warning System:** Operator-controlled LED warning lights and a horn/siren systems were installed for the 2013 striping season. When the operator noticed a vehicle that seemed unaware of the operation, they activate the system to draw the driver's attention.

For more information on the LRAD tool, watch this [short video from the Truman Sports Complex testing](#). Leave your comments on this [innovative system on our LRAD discussion board](#) (*this link works for active employees only*). Also check out LRAD's website here: <http://www.lradx.com/site/>

MoDOT Customer Service Helping Keep Employees And Customers Safe

by Tina White

Every position on the St. Louis traffic management center floor plays a key role to keep our fellow employees and motorists safe on our highways: From the metro dispatcher dispatching motorist assist operators to accidents and stalled vehicles, and customer service operators scanning cameras for crashes, stalls or debris on our highways, to the MoDOT dispatcher communicating with maintenance crews about lane drops. Each of these activities immediately activates message boards to provide advance warning to motorists of incidents or work zones in traffic lanes. The message boards can also be activated to warn of dangerous weather events such as the recent high winds that hit Missouri statewide.



Tina White is a sr. customer service representative in the St. Louis District.

Crashes and temporary work zones causing major traffic impacts are monitored by cameras in an effort to observe traffic and keep our employees and customers safe. Data entered into the computer provides information to motorists using the Traveler Information Map or Gateway Guide map and provides immediate information to those receiving alerts. All of this can happen in a short span of time and makes it exciting to work on the TMC operations floor.

I get a lot of personal satisfaction talking with customers and addressing their concerns, but I particularly like knowing that on any given day my job makes a direct impact in not only helping keep our co-workers safe but motorists on the highway as well.

Stay Safe At Home This Winter

by Holly Dentner

As the weather changes and we move into the winter season, MoDOT takes every opportunity to check its equipment, train employees and refresh our winter operations skills. When it snows in Missouri, MoDOT is ready.

Staying safe during winter weather isn't just about work, though. Now is the time to go through your personal checklist to make sure you and your family are ready for winter. Whether you are a seasoned snow fighter or this is your first year at the department, review these tips and be safe at home and on your way to work.

At home, take time to winterize your residence. ([Check out this list](#) from repair and renovation expert Bob Vila.) Keep some ice melt on hand and put the snow shovel and supplies where it's easy to access them. Take plenty of breaks if you shovel the sidewalk or driveway. If you're not used to strenuous

work, shoveling snow puts a lot of stress on the body in a short period of time.

Prepare your vehicle for winter. Check your battery, lights, antifreeze, wipers, belts, and hoses. Put the ice scraper and other winter supplies in the car now so you don't have to dig for them when you really need them. Don't forget your tires: the condition of the tread can make a big difference when you're driving on slick roads.



It's our job to report to work in inclement weather, so pack an emergency kit in your personal vehicle just in case. The basics include blankets, bottle water and nonperishable food, a cell phone, dry clothing, a shovel, jumper cables, a flashlight and batteries.

If your car is covered in snow or frost, take the time to clear **all** the windows so you have maximum visibility. Don't forget to clear snow off the lights, hood, and other surfaces of your vehicle so you're visible to other motorists.

We share this message with motorists every winter, but it bears repeating: Ice and snow, take it slow – and know before you go! Encourage your family and friends to download MoDOT's Traveler Information App so they have up-to-date road conditions at their fingertips. The map is also available at www.modot.org.



CPR Training - Don't Be Left Out

by Tammy Wallace

Last spring, MoDOT's senior management team recognized that CPR and first aid training fit perfectly with our commitment to working safely every day. At that time they set a goal to have 100 percent of employees trained in CPR and First Aid.

To answer the call, trainers went full speed ahead. Today, we have 87 percent of our workforce trained. That's a great improvement from where we began last spring, but we still have quite a few employees to train.

During this quarter's Tracker meeting, Director Dave Nichols reinforced that we are committed to working to meet the 100 percent goal, and encouraged anyone who has not yet taken the training to do so.

Don't be left out. If you need this training contact your district or division safety and health manager. Let's make that 100 percent in 2014.



Recognizing Employees For Working Safely

by Tammy Wallace

Another way we changed the way we think about safety is with the new safety rewards program – **Safety Begins With Me Awards**. This program, which began in July, is a direct result of employee feedback. Health and safety managers, employee focus groups, and the Employee Advisory Council worked together to create an awards program that gives employees what they like.

SAFETY BEGINS WITH ME AWARDS

Although there have been similar programs in the past, this is the first that offers rewards to both safety-sensitive and non-safety sensitive employees, along with safety-sensitive work units.

This new recognition program, that includes all eligible employees and work units who have met the five safety commitments, reinforces the message that safety is everyone’s responsibility.

All the details about the program, including an overview, eligibility criteria, and FAQ’s can be accessed through the comprehensive safety program site - <http://sharepoint/safety/csp/default.aspx> (works for active employees only).

What's Happening



Chat With the Chief

Remember to check out Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger's blog post and see Ed's recent post on safety - Making a Plan to Go Home Safe - [Chat with the Chief](#).



Win a MoDOT Centennial T-shirt Special Safety Edition Quiz

We all know that speeding is one of the major causes of traffic fatalities and injuries. Getting to your location safely means obeying the posted speed limit at all times.

But did you know when the first speed limit was set in Missouri, and what it was? Here’s a double-quiz question for this special safety edition.

The winners of this quiz and the Nov. 14 quiz will be announced in the Dec. 5 edition of Connections.

QUESTION: In what year was the first speed limit set, and at what mile per hour?

- 1920 - 16 mpg
- 1946 - 40 mpg
- 1903 - 9 mpg
- 1890 - 5 mpg



Click left to enter online or fax your answer, name and phone number to (573) 526-4859 by Friday, Nov. 29 for a shot at the next t-shirt give away ([link works for active employees only](#)).

Connections

The mission of Connections is to be a source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide.

Customer Relations - MoDOT
P.O. Box 270, Jefferson City, MO 65102
573.751.2840 / www.modot.org

Editor: Tammy Wallace

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri.

